

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
CODED WIRE TAG SAMPLING PROGRAM  
DETAILED SAMPLING INSTRUCTIONS  
PERSONAL USE, SPORT AND SUBSISTENCE FISHERIES SAMPLING**

**2014  
CENTRAL, WESTWARD, AND AYK REGIONS**

## **Introduction**

Coded wire tags (CWT) recovered from properly designed and conducted studies can provide scientists, fishery managers and hatchery operators with data for evaluating and managing salmon stocks. The use of this stock identification tool has been in use in Alaska since the 1970's. Scientists and managers use this tool to evaluate both naturally spawning and enhanced stocks of fish.

The Tag Lab will send an email or a letter to each individual sport fishers to inform them of the origin of each adipose clipped fish if a valid email is provided or their name and address are completely and legibly filled out on the sampling form.

## **General Instructions**

All species of salmon and steelhead have been coded wire tagged in various areas of the state. However since 2010, only coho and Chinook salmon have been tagged in Alaska. The species you check for CWT's (externally identified by a missing adipose fin) are dependent on location and your project's goals, objectives, and sampling design. **Individual project objectives, sampling design criteria and specific instructions for how, when, and where you conduct your sampling will be provided by the project leader or your supervisor.** When an adipose clipped fish is observed, the fish should be measured, a CWT Sampling Form completed, a uniquely numbered cinch strap inserted through the mouth and out the operculum, and the head collected. Heads from any adipose clipped salmon or steelhead may be voluntarily turned in to you by an angler. A sampling form must also be filled out as completely as possible for these fish.

A sampling form must be filled out as completely as possible if an angler comes in with a trophy size fish and does not want to surrender the head. It is especially important to record the angler's name and address in this case. Record the name of the taxidermist who will be mounting the fish if the angler knows. Stress the importance of finally getting the head. Try to get the head from the taxidermist. Note on the sampling form that the head was not surrendered to you and send the sampling form to the Tag Lab along with other sampling forms and heads collected.

**A sampling form must be completed for every adipose clipped fish you observe during random sampling, regardless of whether the head was recovered.** You must still complete a sampling form if you find that a head has been removed from an adipose clipped fish and discarded by the angler. Assign that adipose clipped fish the HEAD NUMBER on your next cinch strap. Attach the cinch strap to the sampling form. Indicate on the sampling form that the head was removed and discarded by the angler.

Heads must be placed in individual bags provided by the Tag Lab and kept frozen until sent to the Tag Lab in Juneau. Sampling forms must be included with each shipment **HEADS RECEIVED**

**WITHOUT DATA WILL NOT BE PROCESSED.** Heads should be sent to the Tag Lab periodically during the season, as often as once a week.

## **Specific Instructions**

Note: Specific data items listed on the CWT Sampling Form are identified in these instructions by the use of all capital letters. The sampling form and the specific instructions are divided into five major sections: Interviewer Information; Stratification Information - Random, Sport Samples Only; Angler Information; Catch Information; Sampling Information and Head Recovery Information. These instructions follow the sampling form (Figure 1) from top to bottom and from left to right.

**Only a single value for each requested data item is allowed.** (Exception: NAME OF PLACE FISHED and DISTRICT(S) - SUBDISTRICT(S) where multiple values are accepted.) One sampling form can include all heads recovered from a single location, stream, and day if information specific to a single angler is irrelevant. One sample can be made up of multiple pages if more than ten heads are recovered from a single location, stream, and day.

## **INTERVIEWER INFORMATION**

**SAMPLE NUMBER:** This number identifies each unique sampling form in the CWT database. The supervisor has been given a sample number series to assign. Please contact the Tag Lab if you do not know what sample number series to assign.

**PAGE\_\_\_OF\_\_\_PAGES:** use additional pages if more than 10 heads are recovered per sampling location, day and district. Page numbers are specific to each individual sample; e.g., a sample with 17 heads will have page 2 of 2 with the same sample number assigned to both sheets.

**SOURCE:** circle one:

**personal use** - Specific fisheries may be open by the Board of Fisheries and the Department by regulation or, more commonly, by emergency order that allow resident sport anglers to take salmon by means other than by hook and line in a specific area and time. Participation in these fisheries requires a resident sport fishing license and a permit issued by the Department's Commercial Fisheries Division; occasionally a personal use fishery requires only a sport fishing license. These fisheries are often opened to harvest excess hatchery returns.

**sport** - Traditional fisheries are open to all anglers who have a sport fishing license. Sport fishing may only be conducted by use of hook and line unless otherwise provided by regulation. Open areas and seasons and bag, possession and size limits are regulated by the Board of Fisheries and the Department's Sport Fisheries Division.

**subsistence** - The non-commercial, customary and traditional uses of wild, renewable resources by a resident of Alaska for direct personal or family consumption as food, shelter, fuel, clothing, tools, or transportation, for the making and selling of handicraft articles out of non-edible by-products of fish and wildlife resources taken for personal or family consumption, and for the customary trade, barter, or sharing for personal or family consumption. **Subsistence fishing** is further defined as the taking of, fishing for, or possession of fish, shellfish, or other fisheries resources by a resident of the state for subsistence uses with gillnet, seine, fish wheel, longline, or other means defined by the Board of Fisheries. Participation in these fisheries requires a permit issued by the Department's Commercial Fisheries Division.

**SURVEY SITE:** community near where you are sampling (e.g., Anchorage, Cordova, Homer, Palmer, Soldotna, Valdez, Seward, etc.).

**SAMPLE TYPE:** circle one:

**random** - adipose clipped fish observed during creel surveys.

**select** - adipose clipped fish from a community or area having a creel survey but not recovered in a random sampling process; these fish are often brought to the sampler.

**Voluntary (for sport recoveries only)** - adipose clipped fish from a community or area or time period which isn't covered by a random creel survey program.

**SAMPLER:** your last name

**NAME OF PLACE SAMPLED:** needed for random samples only. Record fishery access location you are sampling (e.g., Ninilchik River, Homer Spit Lagoon, Burma Road access, mouth of Willow Creek, Houston boat launch, Seward small boat harbor, etc.).

**DATE SAMPLED:** Random samples - date fish are sampled by you

Select or Voluntary samples - date fish were caught

### **STRATIFICATION INFORMATION - RANDOM, SPORT SAMPLES ONLY**

Complete this section for every adipose clipped fish observed (whether or not you are able to recover the head) during random sampling programs.

**SPORT HARVEST CODE:** For Random samples only; Do not record if sample is select or voluntary. If random, record the appropriate code from the fishery you are sampling by transferring the two letter code to the appropriate box. Note: the alpha code is derived from the underlined, highlighted letters of the appropriate SPORT HARVEST CODE.

<u>D</u> erby <u>E</u> ntered	- fish entered in a derby
<u>D</u> erby <u>T</u> akehome	- fish caught in a derby, not entered but instead taken home
<u>F</u> reshwater <u>F</u> ishery	- fish caught in freshwater
<u>M</u> arine <u>B</u> oat	- fish caught from a boat that fished in the ocean
<u>M</u> arine <u>R</u> oadside	- fish caught in ocean by angler on shore
<u>T</u> erminal <u>F</u> ishery	- marine fisheries opened or bag/possession limits changed in terminal areas designed to harvest hatchery returns (used in Southeast)

### **ANGLER INFORMATION**

**ANGLER'S NAME:** name of the angler who caught fish. If more than one angler fishing from a single sampled boat caught an adipose clipped fish, you will need to complete a separate sampling form for each individual with their fish. This, along with legible printing, ensures that each angler will receive a letter. Only provide this information for sport fishing not subsistence fishing.

**MAILING ADDRESS:** email or mailed letters informing each angler when and where their tagged fish was released will be processed and mailed a few days after the tag is read. If we do not have a complete mailing address, including zip code or a current email address, a letter will not be generated and mailed. Only provide this information for sport fishermen because subsistence and personal use fishermen are not eligible for sport letters.

## **CATCH INFORMATION**

**DATE CAUGHT:** the day adipose clipped fish were caught. Fish caught on different days must be listed on separate sampling forms.

**WATER TYPE:** Was angler fishing in saltwater, or in freshwater? Circle one:

**saltwater**

**freshwater**

**NAME OF PLACE FISHED:** record specific location where the angler was fishing. This item is especially important if DISTRICT-SUBDISTRICT and/or ANADROMOUS STREAM # are not known.

**AREA INFORMATION (DISTRICT(S)-SUBDISTRICT(S)):** for saltwater angling, record the current and valid commercial fishing district(s) and subdistricts(s) where angler was fishing. Refer to attached LIST OF COMMON "PLACES FISHED." For freshwater angling, record the current valid commercial district and subdistrict that **includes** the ANADROMOUS STREAM # (see attached list). (e.g., Fleming Spit is 221-10, Homer Spit Lagoon is 241-13, Chiniak Bay is 259-21, etc).

**ANADROMOUS STREAM # (freshwater-only):** if this fish was caught in freshwater, please enter the Anadromous Stream Catalog number listed in the latest edition of the "Catalog of Waters Important for Spawning, Rearing or Migration of Anadromous Fishes" published by the Department's Sport Fish Division. This will be at least a ten digit number but could have as many as thirty-eight digits. Please call your local Sport Fish Division office or the Tag Lab for assistance if the catalog is unavailable. Be as descriptive as possible when you record the NAME OF PLACE FISHED. See attached list of possible ANADROMOUS STREAM #s.

## **SAMPLING INFORMATION**

**Please record the counts on all pages of each sampling form for samples with multiple sheets.**

**TOTAL # FISH CHECKED FOR AD-CLIPS:** you must first choose fish to inspect, then look to see if the adipose fin is absent, count and record each fish, by species/species code you choose to inspect. Included in that count will be both unclipped and adipose clipped fish. **Count only those fish you are sure either have or do not have an adipose fin. If you did not get a good look at the fin do not count that fish.** Remember, this sampling form is only for recording CWT sampling information. The number of fish observed for another project should not be recorded here.

**# ADIPOSE CLIPS SEEN:** record by species/species code the number of fish checked that are missing adipose fins. A sampling form must be completed even if no marked fish were observed in the sampled landing. "Zero" for # ADIPOSE CLIPS SEEN is a valid and meaningful observation. A form is not required if no fish were caught by the angler.

**WERE ALL CHECKED?:** circle **yes** or **no** (for each species/species code checked). It is vital that you count only those fish you are sure have or do not have an adipose fin. If you circle yes then you are stating that you observed every single fish of that species landed.

## **HEAD RECOVERY INFORMATION**



**CHECK BOX:** this box will be used by the person in charge of head and data shipment at each survey site to check off heads as they are being boxed for shipment to the Tag Lab.

**HEAD NUMBER:** record the six digit\* number of the cinch strap you attach to the head of each adipose clipped fish. Be sure that the HEAD NUMBER is readable after you insert the cinch strap through the mouth and out the operculum but before you cinch it up. Cinch straps are in numerical order, use them in this order. If you find that a head has been removed from an adipose clipped fish and discarded by the angler, you must complete a sampling form anyway. Assign that discarded or lost head the HEAD NUMBER on your next cinch strap. Attach the cinch strap to the sampling form. Indicate on the sampling form that the head was removed and discarded by the angler.

**\*Note: If you are using a cinch with only five digits or numbers simply insert a leading zero for the first digit.**

**SPECIES CODE:** Record the species code of each adipose clipped fish.

**410 = CHIN** - chinook or king salmon

**411 = JACK** - immature or small king or chinook salmon only;

(DO NOT USE UNLESS SUPERVISOR INSTRUCTS YOU OTHERWISE)

**420 = SOCK** - sockeye or red salmon

**430 = COHO** - coho or silver salmon

**440 = PINK** - pink or humpback salmon

**450 = CHUM** - chum or dog salmon

**540 = STHD** - steelhead trout

**LENGTH:** measure the fish from the mid-eye to fork-of-tail in millimeters (see Figure 2). If an angler gives you a head from an adipose clipped fish and gives you a measurement, ask them what type of measurement was made. An angler will measure the total length of the fish in most cases. Note the type of non-standard measurement taken on the sampling form.

**CLIP STATUS:** circle one. Note the quality of the adipose clip using the following codes:

**Good** - the clip looks like a clean cut with a well healed scar.

**???** (Questionable) - poor quality adipose clips could be the result of bad fin clipping or some natural cause of mutilation. **Recover head regardless of the quality of the adipose fin clip.**

**Unkn** (unknown) - if you only see the head and therefore are unable to assess the quality of the fin clip yourself.

**CHINOOK FLESH COLOR:** (for chinook salmon only). Circle one: **red** or **white**

**COMMENTS:** record any comments you may have about the sample or its irregularities on the back of the sampling form and please indicate that we should "see back of the sampling form."

## **Head Shipment Instructions**

1. Heads should be shipped to the Tag Lab periodically during the season, as often as once a week.
2. Heads must be placed in an individual plastic bag, provided by the Tag Lab. Heads must be frozen (or if a freezer is not available, preserved in borax or salt). Place individually bagged heads in large garbage bags inside a box (waxed or “wet lock” boxes are not required if heads are double bagged).
3. Place all **original** sampling forms in a single plastic bag and place bag in the box with the heads.
4. The person in charge of shipping heads to the Tag Lab will complete the HEAD SHIPMENT SUMMARY FORM and include it with the head shipment. Instructions for completion of that form will be sent to the person in charge of each survey site. Check off heads on sampling form as they are being boxed for shipment in order to ensure that all heads are sent to Juneau. If heads or data are missing, find them.
5. Use the 'CWT Head Shipment' labels to number the boxes so we can be sure the air carrier gives us the complete shipment.
6. Put the data in one box and circle YES Data Enclosed? on the corresponding box label.
7. Attach **KEEP FROZEN/ADDRESS** labels to one or two sides of your boxes.
8. If you live in a community served by Alaska Airlines, send heads and data directly to the Tag Lab on that carrier. If you live in a community not served directly by Alaska Airlines, send shipments to Juneau on a regularly scheduled commuter flight that transfers to Alaska Airlines or provides service directly to Juneau.
9. Please email Detlef Buettner [detlef.buettner@alaska.gov](mailto:detlef.buettner@alaska.gov) or call our front desk at (907) 465-3483 with the airway bill number (if available) and estimated time of arrival of the heads.
10. Use shipping labels provided. Send heads **PREPAID** (see exception in #11) to:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
CF Division, Mark, Tag, and Age Lab  
P.O. Box 25526  
Juneau, Alaska 99802-5526

CALL UPON ARRIVAL IN JUNEAU  
(907) 465-3483
11. Cook Inlet Sport/Escapement heads should be sent to the Tag Lab **FREIGHT COLLECT**. All other projects should send heads to us Prepaid.
12. **HEADS SHIPPED WITHOUT DATA WILL NOT BE PROCESSED.**